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Letter to the Editor

Meeting the unmet needs of family planning



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Dear Sir,

I appreciate the comments made by the learned authors related to our article [1,2]. This cannot be overstressed that catering to “Unmet needs” of the reproductive aged women is perhaps the most critical issue in family planning to attain maximum results with minimal efforts. Unmet need for family planning incorporates the proportions of women in reproductive age group who do not want to either conceive any more or want more children after some time, and are currently not using any family planning method. Estimation of unmet needs is a surrogate marker of deficiency in family planning services, and so, highlights the scope of immediate action [3]. The unmet needs of those women who are aware of family planning methods and still do not use them is further crucial: the reasons may include inability to choose appropriate method (based on personal, social, and financial reasons), unavailability of methods, lack of knowledge about how to use them, and fear of side-effects. Consolidated efforts to address these issues are likely to result in actual usage of family planning methods in this group of patients in a short time. A recent study which assessed the impact of family planning advice on unmet need and contraceptive use among currently

married women in North India also highlighted that family planning advice at the time of maternal health utilization has the potential to increase spacing methods [4]. Our study also highlighted that majority of the women conveyed their desire to use one of the family planning methods in the postpartum period following counselling. This needs to be stressed that there is an urgent need to design and develop a need-based IEC (information, education, and communication) strategy to bridge the existing information gap among the women who have unmet needs for family planning methods [5].

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